

Events of the last two years have made it clear that media consolidation has reached dangerous levels. As the Washington Post and the New York Times have both confessed, the media at large in this country have failed in their duty to fully investigate claims made by the government in the lead up to the war on Iraq. That this failure of the national broadcast and print media to fill their necessary role as an independent source of information coincided with decisions about media consolidation levels raised concern enough. Now, Sinclair Broadcasting's decision to force their stations to air an anti-Kerry documentary days before the election makes it clear that owners of vast sections of the media not only can, but will use their position to attempt to influence the outcome of this election.

Sinclair uses the public airwaves free of charge, and is obligated by law to serve the public interest. But when large companies control the airwaves, we get more of what's good for the bottom line and less of what we need for our democracy.

Sinclair's actions show why we need to strengthen media ownership rules, not weaken them. They show why the license renewal process needs to involve more than a returned postcard. Thank you.